

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action of July 17, 2003. Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough examination of the application. The amendments to the specification correct minor errors. No new matter is believed to be added to the application by this Amendment.

Status of the Claims

Claims 9 and 11-16 are pending in the application. Claims 1-8 and 10 are cancelled by this Amendment. The Examiner has indicated that claim 10 (now cancelled) and claims 11-16 contain allowable subject matter. Claim 9 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable cancelled claim 10. Claims 11 and 12 have been amended so as not to depend upon a cancelled claim. Claims 14 and 16 have been amended to stand as independent claims by incorporating the subject matter of the base claim.

Election/Restriction

The Examiner has withdrawn claims 1-8 from consideration. Claims 1-8 have been cancelled.

The Specification

The Examiner has requested that the specification be checked for the presence of minor errors. Applicants believe that the amended specification is free from errors.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) Over Marumichi

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Marumichi (JP 6-75375). Applicants traverse.

Claim 9 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable claim 10, now cancelled. Claim 9 is now free of this rejection over Marumichi.

This rejection is accordingly overcome and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has acknowledged that claim 10 (now cancelled) and claims 11-16 are allowable.

Prior Art Cited But Not Utilized By The Examiner

The prior art cited but not utilized by the examiner shows the status of the conventional art that the invention supercedes. No additional remarks are accordingly necessary.

Information Disclosure Statements

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the Information Disclosure Statements filed December 10, 2001 and June 29, 2001, and for making the initialed PTO-1449 forms of record in the application in the Office Action mailed July 17, 2003

The Drawings

The Examiner is respectfully requested to indicate whether the drawing figures are acceptable in the next official action.

Foreign Priority

The Examiner has acknowledged foreign priority in the Office Action mailed July 17, 2003.

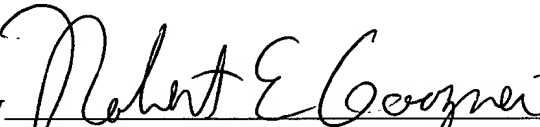
Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert E. Goozner, Ph.D. (Reg. No. 42,593) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By  #42,593
for Raymond C. Stewart, #21,066
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

RCS/REG:jls
2185-0550P

(Rev. 09/30/03)